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ABSTRACT

Analysis of the transcripts of 200 full-time and 200 part-time beginning traditional credit students randomly sampled from the population of students entering each fall from 1967 to 1975 at William Rainey Harper College indicated that: (1) overall student grade point average rose in direct relationship to changes in grading policy; (2) the grade point average of part-time students was consistently higher than that of full-time students; (3) the average age of entering full-time students was 18.5 to 19.5, while the average age of entering part-time students was 26 to 27; (4) because of the growing number of part-time students and the declining number of full-time students, the average age of the traditional credit student body was increasing; (5) students were entering the college with increasing high school class ranks; (6) the average full-time student starting in 1972 had accumulated 41 credit hours by 1976 and had attended four semesters, while the average part-time student starting in 1972 had accumulated 14 credit hours and had attended three semesters; (7) 37.5% of the full-time students and 5.5% of the part-time students entering in 1972 had received degrees by 1976; and (8) the growing enrollment in the continuing education department (CED) was beginning to impact on traditional credit enrollment--7.5% of the part-time students and 1.5% of the full-time students enrolling in 1975 had taken a CED course before beginning traditional credit enrollment. (DC)

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LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS ENTERING HARPER COLLEGE YEARS 1967-1975

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Director

Office of Planning and Research
William Rainey Harper College

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ABSTRACT

THIS STUDY FOLLOWED SAMPLES OF SUCCESSIVE CLASSES (1967-1975) OF 200 FULL-TIME AND 200 PART-TIME STUDENTS EACH YEAR IN A LONGITUDINAL MANNER. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY WAS TO PROVIDE SOME BASIC INSTITUTIONAL DATA ABOUT STUDENT PERFORMANCE OVER TIME. DATA WAS OBTAINED ON THEIR PERFORMANCE AND ACHIEVEMENT AT HARPER THROUGH ANALYSIS OF THE REGULAR AND CONTINUING EDUCATION TRANSCRIPTS OF EACH OF THE STUDENTS SAMPLED.

RESULTS OF THIS STUDY SHOWED OVER THE YEARS THE AVERAGE GRADE POINT OF STUDENT HAS RISEN IN DIRECT RELATIONSHIP TO CHANGES IN THE GRADING POLICY. IN ADDITION, THE GRADE POINT OF PART-TIME STUDENTS HAS REMAINED HIGHER THAN FULL-TIME STUDENTS. PREVIOUS RESEARCH HAS SHOWN THE DIFFERENCE IS PRODUCED BY OLDER STUDENTS ACHIEVING A HIGHER GRADE POINT THAN YOUNGER STUDENTS.

THE AVERAGE FULL-TIME STUDENT STARTING IN 1972 ACCUMULATED 41 CREDIT HOURS AND ATTENDED ALMOST FOUR SEMESTERS WHILE 37½ PERCENT OF THIS CLASS RECEIVED A DEGREE. MEANWHILE, THE AVERAGE PART-TIME STUDENT STARTING IN 1971 HAS ACCUMULATED 15 CREDIT HOURS AND ATTENDED ALMOST THREE SEMESTERS WHILE 8½ PERCENT OF THIS CLASS HAS RECEIVED A DEGREE. IT IS PROJECTED THAT MORE RECENT CLASSES WILL PERSIST SLIGHTLY LONGER AFTER FIVE OR SIX YEARS PASS.

THE RAPIDLY GROWING CONTINUING EDUCATION ENROLLMENT IS BEGINNING TO IMPACT THE TRADITIONAL CREDIT ENROLLMENT AS SHOWN BY THIS LONGITUDINAL STUDY. BETWEEN 7½ and 9½ PERCENT OF THE PART-TIME STUDENTS STARTING IN 1974 and 1975 HAD TAKEN CED COURSES PREVIOUS TO THEIR TRADITIONAL CREDIT ENROLLMENT. MOREOVER IT IS PROJECTED THAT BETWEEN 18-20 PERCENT OF THESE PART-TIME STUDENTS WILL EVENTUALLY PARTICIPATE IN THE CED PROGRAM. IN A LESS DRAMATIC FASHION 1½ PERCENT OF THE FULL-TIME CREDIT STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN CED BEFORE ENROLLING AS A TRADITIONAL CREDIT STUDENT WHILE IT IS ESTIMATED THAT 10 PERCENT OF THE FULL-TIME STUDENTS WILL EVENTUALLY ENROLL IN A CED OFFERING.

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Purpose

The purpose of this study is to follow samples of beginning full-time and part-time traditional credit students over a long period of time observing their performance and achievements at Harper College. This type of longitudinal study provides the answers to such questions as: what percentage of all full-time students starting at Harper will ever graduate or accumulate 36 hours of credit or attend four semesters or will take continuing education courses? The same questions can be answered about beginning part-time students such as their GPA, whether they are a transfer student, their age and their standing in their high school graduating class.

Popualtion Surveyed

A random sample of 200 full-time and 200 part-time beginning traditional credit students has been gathered from the population of students entering each fall from 1967 to 1975.

Method Used

Transcripts have been gathered on all students in the target samples and the data analyzed. In addition, a search has been made for transcripts in the continuing education file on all these targeted students.

Discussion of Results

There have been two policy decisions which have affected the grade point average of students over the years. The first occurred in 1972 when students were able to repeat failed courses and replace the old D or F with the new grade rather than just averaging it in. The second policy change came in 1972 which allowed faculty to give N grades rather than F's to students who simply didn't attend. The following table shows the average grade point of students in these three periods of time.

Year Students Started	1967-1971	Repeat and Replacement of Grade Policy Instituted 1972-1973	N Grade Instituted 1974-1975
Student started as a:			
Full-time students	1.93	2.29	2.57
Part-time students	2.21	2.25	2.75

This table shows that full-time grade point average jumped in 1972 at the start of the repeat and grade replacement policy and again in 1974 when the N grade policy started. The part-time grade point average seemed unaffected until 1974 when the N grade was instituted. Also, notice that generally the grades of part-time students have been higher than full-time students. Other studies have shown that this is because older students earn a higher GPA than younger students and older students are mostly part-time.

In terms of length of time persisted at Harper and credit hours accumulated, this trend started off at a high persistence level for the first 1967 class but then the persistence level dropped dramatically reaching a low in 1969 and then rising until it peaked with the 1971 or 1972 classes. Projections indicate as further data accumulates, the persistence level of more recent classes will level or only rise slightly from the 1971-1972 level.

The average full-time student starting in 1972 has averaged 43 hours attempted, 41 hours passed, and has attended 3.02 semesters. Moreover, 67 percent of this class has returned the following year or later and 37½ percent have received associate degrees at Harper. It appears from projection that after five years, the recent entering classes will top these figures.

The average part-time student beginning in 1971 has averaged in six years 16½ hours attempted, 15 hours passed and has attended 2.94 semesters. About 8½ percent of this 1971 part-time sample have received an associate degree and another 2½ percent received a certificate only. Returning a year or more later were 41½ percent of the part-time sample who started in 1972. Projections indicate that after six years, more recent classes may exceed some of these figures. In an interesting sidelight, one part-time student starting in 1967 was found to have attended Harper for 23 semesters.

Some 10 to 11 percent of the full-time students and 6-7 percent of the part-time students have officially transferred credits in from other colleges. It is interesting to note, however, that Student Characteristic studies have shown that 35-45 percent of Harper's students have had some post secondary experience prior to coming to Harper. Thus most students who have attended another college don't attempt to transfer in credits.

The average age of the entering full-time student has varied between 18 and 19½ while the average age of the part-time student averaged between 26 and 27. The age of these entering students has remained constant but the mix of full-time and part-time students is changing and students are remaining longer. Therefore, the average age of the entire traditional credit student body is gradually increasing.

The high school graduating class rank of Harper's entering students has increased over the years and for the last three years, both the full-time and the part time entering students have averaged about the 60th percentile in their high school graduating classes.

The dramatic growth in Continuing Education enrollment in the last few years and its relationship with traditional credit enrollment is just starting to show up in the longitudinal study data. Since there was no Continuing Education enrollment until the fall of 1970, it was impossible for the first four traditional credit classes to have enrolled after first being introduced to higher education by Continuing Education offerings. Enrollment in CED was at first small but has rapidly grown and its effect can now be seen in the traditional credit classes which began in 1974 and 1975. Seven and a half to nine and a half percent of the part-time students starting in those two years had previously taken Continuing Education courses, a big jump from previous classes. Over the years it appears about 6½ to 9½ percent of the part-time traditional credit students take Continuing Education courses later and in addition two percent take traditional credit and CED courses simultaneously during their first semester. This means a total of 18 to 20 percent of these part-time traditional credit students will eventually also enroll in Continuing Education. Moreover, among these part-time student there is now

about the same number of students motivated to enroll in traditional credit courses as a result of CED envolvement as there are students motivated to participate in CED offerings as a result of their traditional credit enrollment.

The impact of Continuing Education on full-time traditional credit enrollment is less dramatic as would be expected but nevertheless, 1½ percent of these full-time students starting in 1975 had previously enrolled in CED offerings. Over the years 4½ to 10 percent of the full-time traditional credit students participated in CED courses later. In total it appears about 10 percent of the full-time traditional credit students will eventually also enroll in CED offerings.

Major Conclusions

Over the years the average grade point of a student has risen in direct relationship to changes in the grading policy. In addition, the grade point of part-time students has remained higher than full-time students. Previous research has shown this difference is produced by older students achieving a higher grade point than younger students.

The average full-time student starting in 1972 accumulated 41 credit hours and attended almost four semesters while 37½ percent of this class received a degree. Meanwhile, the average part-time student starting in 1971 has accumulated 15 credit hours and attended almost three semesters while 8½ percent of this class has received a degree. It is projected that more recent classes will persist slightly longer after five or six years pass.

The rapidly growing Continuing Education enrollment is beginning to impact the traditional credit enrollment as shown by this longitudinal study. Between 7½ and 9½ percent of the part-time students starting in 1974 and 1975 had taken CED courses previous to their traditional credit enrollment. Moreover, it is projected that between 18-20 percent of these part-time students will eventually participate in the CED program. In a less dramatic fashion 1½ percent of the full-time credit students participated in CED before enrolling as a traditional credit student while it is estimated that 10 percent of these full-time students will eventually enroll in a CED offering.

LONGITUDINAL DATA OF FULL-TIME TRADITIONAL CREDIT STUDENTS AT HAPRER

	Students Beginning in the Fall of								
	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Sample size	200	200	187	218	200	200	200	200	200
Withdrew before establishing a GPA	3	1	5	6	8	0	0	0	0
Mean GPA	1.91	1.81	1.75	2.04	2.12	2.32	2.26	2.57	2.56
Mean cumulative hours attempted	45.1	40.8	32.5	36.6	39.6	43.3	39.9	40.3	25.7
Mean cumulative hours passed	39.9	34.7	27.3	32.6	36.2	40.7	37.2	39.3	25.0
Percent registered one year later	57.5	53.0	42.3	44.5	58.0	58.0	56.0	68.0	59.0
Percent not registered one year later but who returned another time	17.0	12.5	12.3	12.4	7.0	9.0	10.5	5.0	-
Percent who never returned after first year	25.0	34.5	45.4	43.1	35.0	33.0	33.5	27.0	41.0
Average number of semesters registered	4.20	3.72	3.08	3.44	3.70	3.92	3.72	3.53	2.17
Percent registering for:									
One semester	15.0	12.5	26.7	18.4	16.5	9.0	8.5	7.5	9.5
Two semesters	12.5	22.0	20.9	23.4	20.5	22.5	24.0	22.0	67.0
Three semesters	10.0	13.5	16.0	13.3	10.5	11.5	14.5	11.0	21.0
Four semesters	21.5	17.5	16.0	18.3	20.0	21.0	18.5	35.0	2.5
Five semesters	17.0	18.0	7.0	12.8	13.0	15.5	18.5	19.5	0
Six semesters	11.0	8.0	8.0	6.9	9.5	9.5	8.0	4.5	0
Seven or more semesters	13.0	8.5	5.4	6.9	10.0	11.0	8.0	.5	0
Percent passing or achieving:									
Under 24 hours	31.5	37.5	54.0	43.6	40.5	23.0	32.5	24.0	30.5
24-35 hours	11.5	21.0	14.4	16.0	14.0	24.5	17.0	20.0	65.0
36-47 hours	12.0	10.5	7.5	8.2	7.0	4.5	11.5	14.5	1.5
48 or more hours-no degree	22.5	14.5	11.2	12.4	12.5	9.0	9.0	14.5	0
48 or more hours with degree	21.0	16.5	11.8	17.0	23.5	34.0	26.0	25.0	0
Less than 48 hours with degree	1.0	0	1.1	1.4	1.5	3.5	2.5	1.0	1.5
Certificate only	.5	0	0	1.4	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.5

LONGITUDINAL DATA OF FULL-TIME TRADITIONAL CREDIT STUDENTS AT HARPER

	Students Beginning in the Fall of								
	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Percent transferring in officially	11.0	20.0	4.0	3.0	10.0	11.0	11.0	10.0	9.0
Percent taking CED courses	4.50	8.00	4.28	4.59	6.50	10.00	8.00	9.50	5.00
Percent taking traditional credit courses first	4.50	8.00	4.28	4.59	6.00	10.00	7.50	9.50	3.50
Percent taking CED first	0	0	0	0	.50	0	.50	0	1.50
Percent taking them simultaneously	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean age	18.4	18.9	18.9	19.5	18.4	19.1	18.1	18.6	19.3
Sample size of age	101	99	181	209	194	175	167	179	179
Mean rank in class	36.9	43.5	43.5	41.4	44.1	49.5	59.4	62.0	59.5
Sample size of class size	72	54	154	191	135	115	138	150	166
Mean ACT composite	19.4	20.0	20.0	20.3	19.5	19.8	18.9	19.0	18.9
Sample size of ACT	80	84	162	173	50	60	113	47	111

LONGITUDINAL DATA OF PART-TIME TRADITIONAL CREDIT STUDENTS AT HAPRER

	Students Beginning in the Fall of								
	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Sample size	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Withdrew before establishing a GPA	21	16	19	9	13	0	8	0	4
Mean GPA	2.28	2.05	2.15	2.27	2.31	2.20	2.30	2.85	2.65
Mean cumulative hours attempted	16.8	14.0	14.0	14.2	16.6	16.1	15.6	10.8	8.9
Mean cumulative hours passed	15.2	12.0	12.2	12.6	14.9	13.9	14.1	10.4	8.4
Percent registered one year later	29.5	21.0	25.5	25.0	24.0	29.0	21.0	32.0	32.0
Percent not registed one year later but who returned another time	14.0	18.0	10.0	11.0	10.5	12.5	6.0	7.5	-
Percent who never returned after first year	56.5	61.0	64.5	64.0	65.5	58.5	63.0	60.5	68.0
Average number of semesters registered	3.17	2.67	2.67	2.62	2.94	2.80	2.58	2.28	1.74
Percent registering for:									
One semester	38.5	45.0	50.0	43.5	38.0	42.0	44.5	40.0	41.5
Two semesters	23.0	23.5	16.0	25.0	27.0	19.5	20.5	25.5	45.0
Three semesters	9.5	10.0	7.5	11.0	8.0	8.0	11.0	13.5	12.0
Four semesters	7.5	5.5	8.0	7.0	7.0	8.5	7.5	12.0	.5
Five semesters	5.5	6.0	4.5	2.0	3.5	5.5	3.0	6.0	0
Six semesters	3.5	2.5	5.5	2.5	5.0	7.5	6.0	2.5	0
Seven or more semesters	12.5	7.5	8.5	9.0	11.5	9.0	7.5	.5	0
Percent passing or achieving:									
Under 12 hours	68.5	73.0	71.5	73.0	67.0	65.0	66.0	68.5	74.0
12-23 hours	13.0	13.5	12.0	11.0	14.5	12.5	15.5	17.5	21.0
24-35 hours	4.5	4.5	3.5	2.5	4.0	8.0	4.5	8.0	4.5
36-47 hours	2.5	1.5	2.0	2.5	1.5	3.5	3.5	3.0	.5
48 or more hours-no degree	2.5	1.5	2.0	1.5	2.0	3.0	1.5	0	0
48 or more hours with degree	7.5	4.5	5.0	5.0	6.5	4.5	6.5	.5	0
Less than 48 hours with degree	1.0	1.0	1.5	3.5	2.0	1.0	2.0	1.5	0
Certificate only	.5	.5	1.0	1.0	2.5	2.5	.5	1.0	0

LONGITUDINAL DATA OF PART-TIME TRADITIONAL CREDIT STUDENTS AT HARPER

	Students Beginning in the Fall of								
	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Percent transferring in officially	10.0	3.0	6.0	7.0	7.0	2.0	9.0	9.0	6.5
Percent taking CED courses	9.50	6.0	4.50	9.50	11.50	10.50	11.50	17.50	14.00
Percent taking Traditional credit courses first	9.50	6.0	4.50	9.50	6.50	8.50	8.50	6.00	4.50
Percent taking CED first	0	0	0	0	3.50	2.00	2.00	9.50	7.50
Percent taking them simultaneously	0	0	0	0	1.50	0	1.00	2.00	2.00
Mean age	26.8	26.2	26.9	26.1	25.9	25.3	23.6	27.7	26.7
Sample size of age data	200	199	195	182	190	172	134	161	167
Mean rank in class	31.5	47.6	48.4	25.7	30.7	32.5	58.7	62.7	60.7
Sample size of rank data	15	96	175	170	28	33	120	118	155
Mean ACT composite	17.8	17.9	16.1	19.2	19.2	18.8	18.3	20.0	17.1
Sample size of ACT data	18	16	10	27	19	13	24	2	21

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